

The Provisions

The official newsletter of
Simon de Montfort 2014

September 2013

The 12th of September marks the 800th anniversary of the battle of Muret, when Simon de Montfort's father defeated a vastly superior force under King Peter II of Aragon. The elder Montfort had been going from victory to victory in the Albigensian Crusade, and the lords of the Midi, unable to defeat him in the field, asked Peter to help them get these French off their backs. At the time, Peter's five-year old son James was living in the Montfort household as part of an arrangement for him to marry Simon's daughter Amicia. If he became friends with the younger Simon, who was about the same age, he sure didn't show it by trying to turn Henry against him during the aborted Poitou campaign in 1242.



Simon de Montfort by
François-Louis Dejuinne

Peter has been portrayed as chivalrous for switching his armour with an ordinary knight. He certainly didn't do his men any favours, for the battle turned into a rout once he was cut down. Edward's own 'chivalrous' blunder at Lewes fifty years later would likewise cost Henry dearly. Other similarities between the two battles include attempts by the clergy to mediate a peace beforehand and the air of divine judgement that accompanied the victory by the smaller army. The theme of Simon de Montfort drawing inspiration from his father is explored in the article [Like Father Like Son](#).



Peter II of Aragon by
Manuel Aguirre Monsalbe

The elder Montfort could certainly use some better press. Apparently he is portrayed as inordinately cruel in a TV series called *Labyrinth*. It's about a beautiful blond PhD student haunted by the ghost of a 17-year-old girl from 13th century Carcassonne, who's somehow connected to an 'ancient genocide and the secrets of the Holy Grail.' Enough said.

I've been sufficiently inspired by Montfort's march out of London to re-title the book *With All For All: Simon de Montfort and the Rise of the English Nation*. I spent most of the past week trying to recast Eleanor de Montfort as a more complicated figure than Margaret Labarge's 'shrill' and 'nagging' wife. Check out Sarah Butterfield's excellent recap of Eleanor's life [here](#) or go to her [website](#), which deals extensively with Henry III and his times.

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